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# 1997 Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries:

## Key Findings for Region 4

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## Executive Summary

The Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries (HCSDB) is designed to answer the following five questions:

- How *satisfied* are DoD beneficiaries with their health care?
- How *accessible* is health care at military and civilian facilities?
- How *knowledgeable* are beneficiaries about TRICARE and TRICARE Prime, and what are the sources of information about TRICARE?
- What health care *services* do beneficiaries use, and what are the *sources* of those services?
- How much, and what types of, *preventive health care* do beneficiaries use?

Conducted annually since 1995 and sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) [OASD(HA)], the survey is conducted under the authority of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 (P.L. 102-484). This report presents the key findings of the 1997 HCSDB for adults for Region 4. The findings are summarized below.

### Satisfaction

- Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who received some care at a military or civilian treatment facility or both during the 12 months preceding the survey, which we will call patients throughout the report, most were satisfied with the care they received. Satisfaction with care at military treatment facilities (MTFs) in Region 4 is the same as the MHS average (59 percent).
- Satisfaction with care at civilian treatment facilities (CTFs) in Region 4 (83 percent) is greater than satisfaction with MTF care (59 percent), as is the case in every region. A national civilian benchmark indicates that in 1997, 89 percent of households were satisfied with their health care.
- The proportion of enrollees who are satisfied with TRICARE Prime in Region 4 (52 percent) is less than the proportion of beneficiaries who are satisfied with military health care in general (59 percent). Across all regions, 52 percent of enrollees are satisfied with TRICARE Prime, compared with 59 percent who are satisfied with military care.
- Regardless of the type of beneficiary, satisfaction with civilian care in Region 4 is greater than satisfaction with military care. Satisfaction with military care is lowest among retirees, survivors, and their family members (57 percent) and highest among the family members of active duty personnel (63 percent).
- In Region 4, 27 percent of enrolled active duty personnel are unlikely to re-enroll in TRICARE Prime in the next 12 months. Among enrolled non-active duty personnel, 21 percent are unlikely to re-enroll. Among those who are not currently enrolled, less than 14 percent are likely to enroll in TRICARE Prime.
- In Region 4, satisfaction with TRICARE Prime is only slightly higher among enrollees who have a civilian primary care manager (PCM) (56 percent) than among those with a military PCM (52 percent).

## Access to Care

- Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who used an ER in the past year, 19 percent used it because they could not get an appointment with their usual health care provider. TRICARE Prime enrollees were more likely than non-enrollees to report using the ER because they could not get a regular appointment.
- In Region 4, only 5 percent of TRICARE Prime enrollees reported waiting longer than 30 days for a routine care appointment at a military facility, compared with 10 percent of those not enrolled in TRICARE Prime. The TRICARE standard for enrollees is 30 days for such a visit.
- In Region 4, the incidence of long waits in a physician's office is slightly greater at MTFs than at CTFs. Between 28 and 35 percent of MTF patients reported waiting more than 30 minutes to see a provider, compared with about 25 percent of CTF patients. The TRICARE standard is a 30-minute wait.
- The most frequently cited reasons for not receiving care at a military facility in Region 4 are the beneficiary's distance from a MTF (33 percent), the difficulty of making appointments at a MTF (30 percent), and the higher quality of care in civilian facilities (23 percent). In addition, 27 percent of patients reported that they had never tried to use a MTF.

## Knowledge of TRICARE

- Only 29 percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 reported having no knowledge of TRICARE. This is virtually identical with the reported level of knowledge in other new TRICARE regions.
- Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE, 30 percent have unclear information about enrolling in TRICARE Prime. Among active duty beneficiaries, 25 percent reported having unclear information about enrolling.
- Among those in Region 4 who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE, the most frequently cited sources of information about TRICARE are the information package mailed to beneficiaries (60 percent), a TRICARE presentation (35 percent), the military base newspaper (30 percent) and friends and neighbors (30 percent).

## Source of Care

- Thirty-five percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 and 25 percent of beneficiaries in all regions used a military pharmacy to fill prescriptions written by a civilian provider in the 12 months prior to the survey. In Region 4, retirees, survivors, and family members age 65 or over (55 percent) were the most likely to do this.
- Ninety-two percent of active duty personnel use a MTF for their regular source of care, as do 67 percent of active duty family members, 30 percent of retirees and their family members under age 65, and 13 percent of retirees and their family members age 65 or over. Only 2 percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 rely on something other than a MTF or CTF as their usual source of care.

## Use of Care

- In the 12 months leading up to the survey, MHS beneficiaries who used civilian facilities tended to have more outpatient visits than those who used military facilities. Across all regions, 41 percent of CTF patients had six or more outpatient visits, compared with 31 percent of MTF patients.



- Among MTF patients in Region 4, those enrolled in TRICARE Prime had significantly more outpatient visits than those not enrolled in Prime. In contrast to the pattern observed at MTFs, TRICARE Prime enrollees at CTFs tended to have fewer outpatient visits than their non-enrolled counterparts.

## **Preventive Care**

- Nearly all MHS beneficiaries had a blood pressure screening in the past two years, as did beneficiaries in Region 4 (96 percent). Both results exceed the Healthy People 2000 goal of 90 percent.
- Eighty-three percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 had a cholesterol screening in the past five years. This exceeds the Healthy People 2000 goal for adults (75 percent) and is about equal to the average for all regions (81 percent).
- Eighty-three percent of female beneficiaries age 50 or over in Region 4 had a breast cancer screening in the past two years. This result is comparable with the MHS average of 84 percent. Both results exceed the Healthy People 2000 goal of 60 percent and the civilian benchmark of 56 percent.
- Eighty-eight percent of female beneficiaries and 97 percent of female active duty personnel in Region 4 have had a Pap smear in the past three years. Both results meet the Healthy People 2000 goal of 85 percent and surpass the 60 to 70 percent result observed in the civilian sector.
- Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who were pregnant at some point during the year preceding the survey, 90 percent received prenatal care in the first trimester. In the civilian sector, between 76 and 84 percent of pregnant women receive prenatal care in the first trimester. The Healthy People 2000 goal is 90 percent.
- Over three-fourths of male beneficiaries age 50 or over in Region 4 (79 percent) and in the MHS overall (78 percent) had a prostate screening in the past two years. The American Cancer Society recommends an annual prostate exam for men age 50 or over.

## **Enrollment and Beneficiary Health Status**

- Enrollment in TRICARE Prime in Region 4 (48 percent) is comparable with enrollment in the average new TRICARE region (50 percent).
- In Region 4, 53 percent of beneficiaries have a composite physical health score below the age-adjusted median score for the U.S. population. This suggests that, in terms of health status, beneficiaries in Region 4 are similar to their counterparts in the civilian population. Active duty beneficiaries tend to be somewhat healthier than civilians of the same age, with only 43 percent falling below the median score for the U.S. population.

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## Chapter

# 1

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## Introduction

The Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries (HCSDB) is a survey of a large, randomly selected and representative sample of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) health care beneficiaries. Conducted annually since 1995 and sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) [OASD(HA)], the survey is conducted under the authority of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 (P.L. 102-484).

This document is one of a series of reports on the 1997 HCSDB. The following sections outline the basic framework of the survey, how to use its findings, and findings of note.

## Research Questions

The HCSDB is designed to answer the following five questions:

- How *satisfied* are DoD beneficiaries with their health care?
- How *accessible* is health care at military and civilian facilities?
- How *knowledgeable* are beneficiaries about TRICARE and TRICARE Prime, and what are the sources of information about TRICARE?
- What health care *services* do beneficiaries use, and what are the *sources* of those services?
- How much, and what types of, *preventive health care* do beneficiaries use?

This report presents the key findings of the 1997 HCSDB for adults for Region 4. Lead Agents are encouraged to share the findings with their staff members and each officer responsible for a catchment area in their region. The report is designed to provide relevant information to Lead Agents and medical treatment facility (MTF) commanders to inform their management of issues affecting the military health care system and its facilities.

## Reports in the Series

This report is the first in a series of three companion reports for Region 4, which include the following:

- **The 1997 Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries: Key Findings for Region 4.** This report summarizes the key findings for the region. Together with complementary reports on the other 12 TRICARE regions, it serves as an executive summary of the entire study. Each of the 13 reports provides a brief overview of the purpose, background, and methodology of the survey; suggestions on how to use the survey findings; and data exhibits and summaries of findings for each of the five principal research questions outlined above.
- **The 1997 Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries: Summary Reports on Catchment Areas for Region 4.** These reports present key survey results for each catchment area in the region. Each report also contains an executive summary of the purpose and methodology of the survey.
- **The 1997 Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries: Technical Regional Report for Region 4.** This report has three functions. First, it presents a complete and detailed documentation of the survey methodology and is to be used as a reference. Second, it presents a complete set of survey results for the region. Third, it presents key survey results for each catchment area in the region.

## Background

Title VII, Subtitle C, of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 directs the U.S. Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual survey of DoD beneficiaries to assess their knowledge and use of the military health care system as well as their satisfaction with the system's accessibility and quality of care. In 1993, DoD assigned responsibility for the survey to OASD(HA), which designed the survey in 1994 and sponsored its administration in 1995, 1996, and 1997. Following the 1995 and 1996 surveys, OASD(HA) provided a regional report on the survey findings to each Lead Agent.

In the summer of 1997, OASD(HA) sponsored a re-evaluation of these regional reports. United HealthCare performed the assessment, interviewing several Lead Agents and their staff members and making recommendations to OASD(HA) for future reports. The reports in this 1997 series are based on those recommendations.

## How to Interpret the Survey Findings

Focusing on the research underlying the HCSDB is the best way to understand and make use of the survey findings. Those questions, outlined on page 1, reflect two sets of variables.

The first set of variables comprises the *outcome* (or dependent) *variables*. These include answers to survey questions on beneficiaries' satisfaction with their health care, barriers to accessing care, knowledge of TRICARE, use of health care and preventive services, and sources of health care.

The second set of variables comprises the *explanatory* (or independent) *variables*, which may help explain differences in one or more of the outcome variables listed above. Exhibit 2.1 in Chapter 2, for example, presents findings on beneficiaries who reported being satisfied with their health care in each of the 13 regions. The exhibit addresses the question: "How does the satisfaction of beneficiaries (the outcome variable) differ across regions (the explanatory variables)?" In other words, does the location of beneficiaries in a particular region appear to affect their level of satisfaction?

Throughout the regional and catchment area reports in this series, all exhibits display the outcome variable on the vertical axis (the Y-axis) and the explanatory variables on the horizontal axis (the X-axis).

In Exhibit 2.1, the height of a given bar represents the average percentage of beneficiaries reporting being satisfied with their health care in the region indicated on the horizontal axis. Similarly, in many of the other exhibits, the height of a given bar represents the percentage of the beneficiaries in question who fall into the category indicated on the horizontal axis.

It is important to recognize that the results of any survey are not strictly precise. The statistics presented in this report are *estimates* of the true answers to the research questions, both because the survey is based on a sample, rather than on a census of the entire population in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), and because some of the people surveyed chose not to respond. The survey design does, however, allow us to evaluate how precise the estimates are. The margin of error for estimates based on all beneficiaries or all patients in Region 4 is less than 2 percentage points. The margin of error for estimates based on TRICARE Prime enrollees in Region 4 is less than 3 percentage points. Estimates based on smaller subgroups, such as pregnant women, may be considerably less precise. The *Technical Report on Region 4* in this series presents a more detailed discussion of these issues, such as standard errors, weighting of the completed questionnaire, and adjusting the data to account for nonrespondents.

## Methodology

In September 1997, the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) drew a random sample of DoD beneficiaries from the DEERS database that is representative of all persons in the system as of July 14, 1997. DEERS includes all persons eligible for a military health system (MHS) benefit: personnel activated for more than 30 days in the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and National Guard or Reserve, as well as other special categories of people who qualify for health benefits. DEERS covers active duty personnel and their families as well as retirees and their family members.

In November and December 1997, Data Recognition Corporation mailed the survey questionnaire to 156,388 adults and 30,253 parents of sampled beneficiaries under age 18. Of the adult questionnaires, 78,857 were completed and returned by the due date of March 31, 1998, for a response rate of 50.8 percent. Of the child questionnaires, 14,293 were completed and returned by the due date, for a response rate of 47.4 percent.

Both the adult questionnaire (Form A) and the child questionnaire (Form C) include a variety of survey questions designed to answer the five research questions listed on page 1, although the child questionnaire covers them in somewhat less detail. The Form A survey questionnaire may be found in Appendix E of the Technical Regional Report.

The sample for Region 4 included 11,530 adults and 2,540 parents of sampled children. Of the adults, 6,164 returned completed questionnaires by the due date, for a response rate of 54.5 percent; 1,234 parents of sampled children did the same, for a response rate of 48.9 percent.

To ensure that the survey results are representative of the DEERS population, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) adjusted the data to reflect the characteristics of the initial sample and to correct for the sampled individuals who chose not to respond to the survey. The data in this report are therefore estimated to be representative of the population of persons eligible for military health care in Region 4. The survey methodology and analysis are described in detail in "The 1997 Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries (HCSDB): Technical Manual".

## The HCSDB in Context with Other Data Sources

The HCSDB is one of several DoD health surveys. The HCSDB is unique, providing information that is unavailable from any other DoD health survey. Specifically, the HCSDB is the only survey covering the topics listed above representing *all* DoD beneficiaries. The other DoD health surveys represent only a portion of the beneficiary population. Thus, the HCSDB is the only data on these topics representing the entire population a Lead Agent or a MTF commander is charged with.

The following is a summary contrasting the HCSDB with these other sources:

- **Health Enrollment Assessment Review (HEAR).** The health status findings of the HCSDB are not comparable to those of the HEAR because the surveys represent different populations. The HCSDB represents all military health system beneficiaries as of a single date, July 14, 1997, and their survey responses between December 1997 and March 1998 (for the 1997 HCSDB). In contrast, the HEAR represents those who enrolled in TRICARE during the previous year; the results are considered a part of the patient's medical record as a managed care tool, and are seldom accessible for making generalizations.

New enrollees do not, in general, have the same health status or other characteristics as the population of all beneficiaries. For example, new enrollees are younger, on average, than other beneficiaries, and their health status is therefore different from that of older beneficiaries.

- **MTF Customer Satisfaction Survey.** The HCSDB results on satisfaction are not comparable to the results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey, again because the two surveys represent different populations. The HCSDB results represent the satisfaction of all DoD beneficiaries, regardless of the source of care, whereas the Customer Satisfaction Survey results represent the satisfaction of patients, that is, those who visit a MTF or other military clinic. Moreover, the Customer Satisfaction Survey queries its sample members immediately following the person's visits to the MTF or clinic and asks about that specific visit. The results will be significantly different if an individual is generalizing their satisfaction over an extended period, as in the HCSDB, as compared to focusing on a specific visit.
- **Survey of Health-Related Behaviors among Military Personnel (SHRBMP).** The preventive care results of the HCSDB are not comparable to those of the SHRBMP because the two surveys represent different populations. While the HCSDB results represent the preventive care of all DoD beneficiaries, the SHRBMP results represents only active duty personnel. The SHRBMP focuses on specific behaviors that put the active duty member or his family at risk of illness or injury. Further, the HCSDB is annual, while the SHRBMP is fielded once every 18 months to three years.
- **MHS Performance Report Card.** Although several performance measures in the MHS Performance Report Card appear to be the same as certain HSCDB measures, comparing the findings of these two surveys is not meaningful for two reasons. First, the Report Card represents an individual MTF, while the HSCDB represents all beneficiaries in a geographic area such as a region or a catchment area. Second, the Report Card presents secondary data; that is, it reconfigures data from other sources of health care information. Specifically, performance measures that appear to be the same as ones in the HSCDB are, in fact, based on HSCDB data. Other performance measures are based on MTF Customer Satisfaction Survey data or on Standardized Inpatient Data Records.

## **The Findings in Context with a National Civilian Benchmark**

Exhibit 2.1 in the next chapter compares the percentage of DoD beneficiaries who are satisfied with their health care with a national benchmark of civilian satisfaction. The national civilian benchmark is based on the 1997 Household Survey conducted by the Center for Studying Health System Change in Washington, D.C. The Center is a not-for-profit research organization funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in Princeton, New Jersey. The Household Survey collected data on satisfaction with health care in 1997 from approximately 1,300 families in 60 sites nationally. Satisfaction measures included overall health care, choice of providers, technical quality of care received at last visit, and provider-patient communication.

## **Preventive Care Standards**

Chapter 7 examines the use of preventive care, such as routine physicals and mammography. Beneficiaries' actual use of preventive care is compared to civilian standards, which represent desired goals of preventive care use in the civilian sector. Beneficiaries' actual use of preventive care is also compared to civilian benchmarks, which represent actual preventive care use among civilians.

Most of the civilian standards are based on Healthy People 2000 preventive care goals. The American Cancer Society guideline is used for prostate screening because no standard is given in Healthy People 2000. Civilian benchmarks are based on data published by the National Center for Quality Assurance and the National Center for Health Statistics.

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## Chapter

# 2

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## Satisfaction with TRICARE and TRICARE Prime

This chapter is designed to answer the question, “How *satisfied* are (DoD) beneficiaries with their health care?” The HCSDB measures satisfaction by asking beneficiaries to rate their military care overall, their civilian care overall, and specific aspects of each type of care using a 5-point scale. For most of the questions, the scale ranges from *excellent* to *poor*. For a few questions, the beneficiary is asked whether or not he or she agrees with a statement about health care. The scale for those questions ranges from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*.

The key findings about satisfaction are presented below. A Performance Improvement Plan for Region 4 based on these findings is included in Chapter 9.

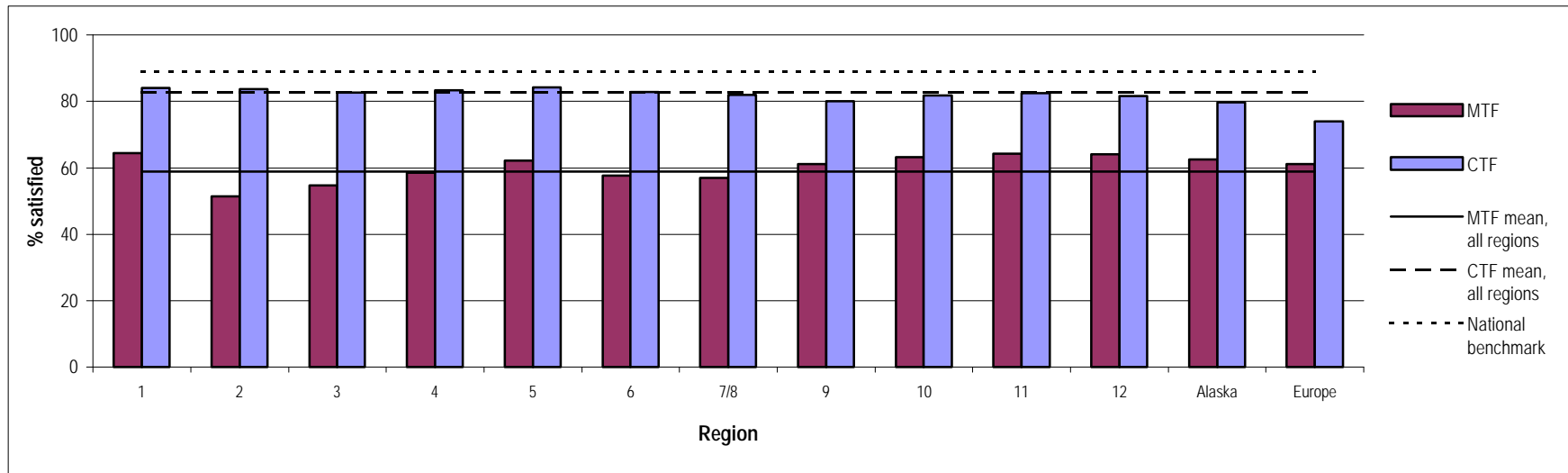
### All Beneficiaries Who Received Care in the Past 12 Months

- Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who received some care at a military or civilian treatment facility or both during the 12 months preceding the survey, which we will call patients throughout the report, most were satisfied with the care they received. Satisfaction with care at military treatment facilities (MTFs) in Region 4 is the same as the MHS average (59 percent).
- Satisfaction with care at civilian treatment facilities (CTFs) in Region 4 (83 percent) is greater than satisfaction with MTF care (59 percent), as is the case in every region. A national civilian benchmark indicates that in 1997, 89 percent of households were satisfied with their health care.
- The proportion of enrollees who are satisfied with TRICARE Prime in Region 4 (52 percent) is less than the proportion of beneficiaries who are satisfied with military health care in general (59 percent). Across all regions, 52 percent of enrollees are satisfied with TRICARE Prime, compared with 59 percent who are satisfied with military care.
- Regardless of the type of beneficiary, satisfaction with civilian care in Region 4 is greater than satisfaction with military care. Satisfaction with military care is lowest among retirees, survivors, and their family members (57 percent) and highest among the family members of active duty personnel (63 percent).

### Enrolled Beneficiaries

- In Region 4, 27 percent of enrolled active duty personnel are unlikely to re-enroll in TRICARE Prime in the next 12 months. Among enrolled non-active duty personnel, 21 percent are unlikely to re-enroll. Among those who are not currently enrolled, less than 14 percent are likely to enroll in TRICARE Prime.
- In Region 4, satisfaction with TRICARE Prime is only slightly higher among enrollees who have a civilian primary care manager (PCM) (56 percent) than among those with a military PCM (52 percent).

## 2.1 Patients Satisfied with the Care They Received at a Military (MTF) or Civilian (CTF) Treatment Facility, by Region and Compared to a National Civilian Benchmark



### Population:

Patients who received some care at a MTF or CTF or both during the 12 months preceding their survey response

**Sample size:** 67,912

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample who “strongly agree” or “agree” they are satisfied with the care they received

### Horizontal axis:

All regions

**Survey questions:** 51a and 66a

### What the exhibit shows:

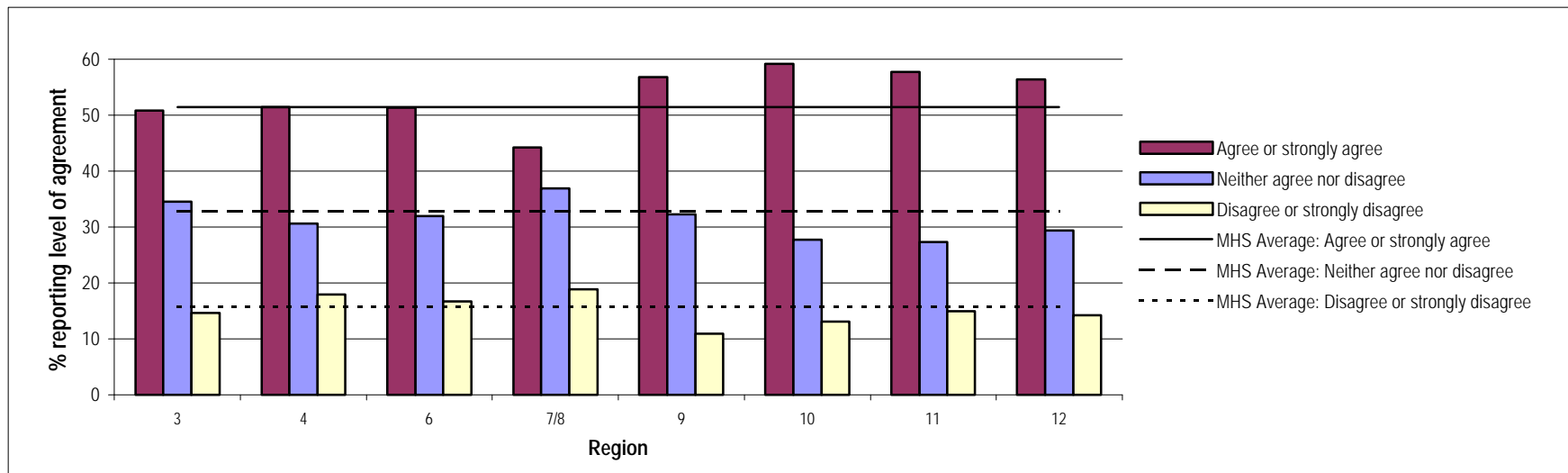
- How satisfaction with care in Region 4 compares to that in other regions
- How satisfaction at MTFs compares to that at CTFs
- How MHS satisfaction rates compare to a national benchmark for civilians' satisfaction

### Findings:

Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who received some care at a MTF or CTF or both during the 12 months preceding the survey, which we will call patients throughout the report, most were satisfied with the care they received. Satisfaction with MTF care in Region 4 is the same as the MHS average (59 percent). Satisfaction with CTF care in Region 4 (83 percent) is greater than satisfaction with MTF care (59 percent), as is the case in every region.

To compare the satisfaction of MHS patients to that of civilians generally, we used a civilian benchmark based on the 1997 Household Survey developed by the Center for Studying Health System Change. According to this survey, civilian households were somewhat more satisfied with their health care (89 percent) than were patients at CTFs (83 percent), and far more satisfied than were patients at MTFs (59 percent).

## 2.2 TRICARE Prime Enrollees' Levels of Satisfaction with Prime, for Mature TRICARE Regions



### Population:

Beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Prime, including both those who received care in the 12 months preceding their survey response and those who did not

### Sample size: 17,758

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting a given level of satisfaction

### Horizontal axis:

Regions that implemented TRICARE prior to the fall of 1997 (mature TRICARE regions)

### Survey question: 82a

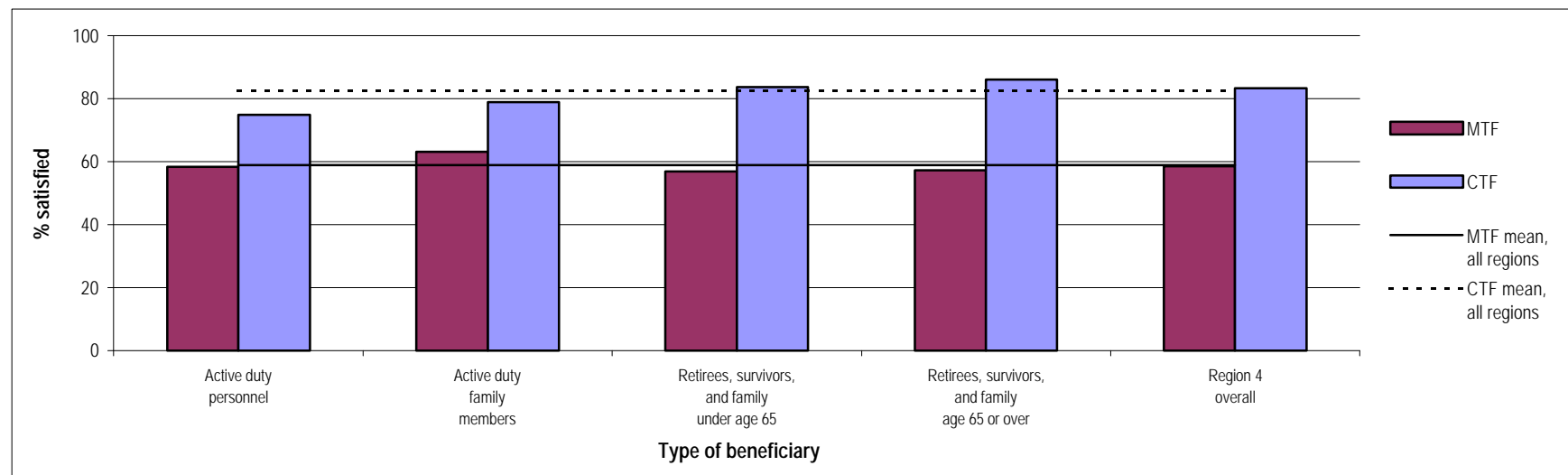
### What the exhibit shows:

- In mature TRICARE regions, how satisfied TRICARE Prime enrollees are with the care they receive
- How satisfaction levels vary across mature regions

### Findings:

About half (52 percent) of the TRICARE Prime enrollees in Region 4 reported being satisfied with the care they received, while 18 percent reported being dissatisfied. The level of satisfaction with TRICARE Prime in Region 4 is about the same as the average level of satisfaction in the new and mature TRICARE regions. Overall, enrollee satisfaction in the new TRICARE regions (Regions 3, 4, and 7/8) is lower than satisfaction within the mature TRICARE regions (Regions 6, 9, 10, 11, 12).

## 2.3 Patients Satisfied with the Military or Civilian Care They Received in Region 4, by Type of Beneficiary, and in All Regions



### Population:

Patients who received some care at a MTF CTF or both during the 12 months preceding their survey response

**Sample size:** 5,731

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample who “strongly agree” or “agree” they are satisfied with the care they received

### Horizontal axis:

Types of beneficiaries receiving care at a MTF or CTF

**Survey questions:** 51a and 66a

### What the exhibit shows:

- Whether some patients in the Region 4 are more satisfied with their care than others
- Whether their satisfaction varies by whether the care was from a MTF or from a CTF
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

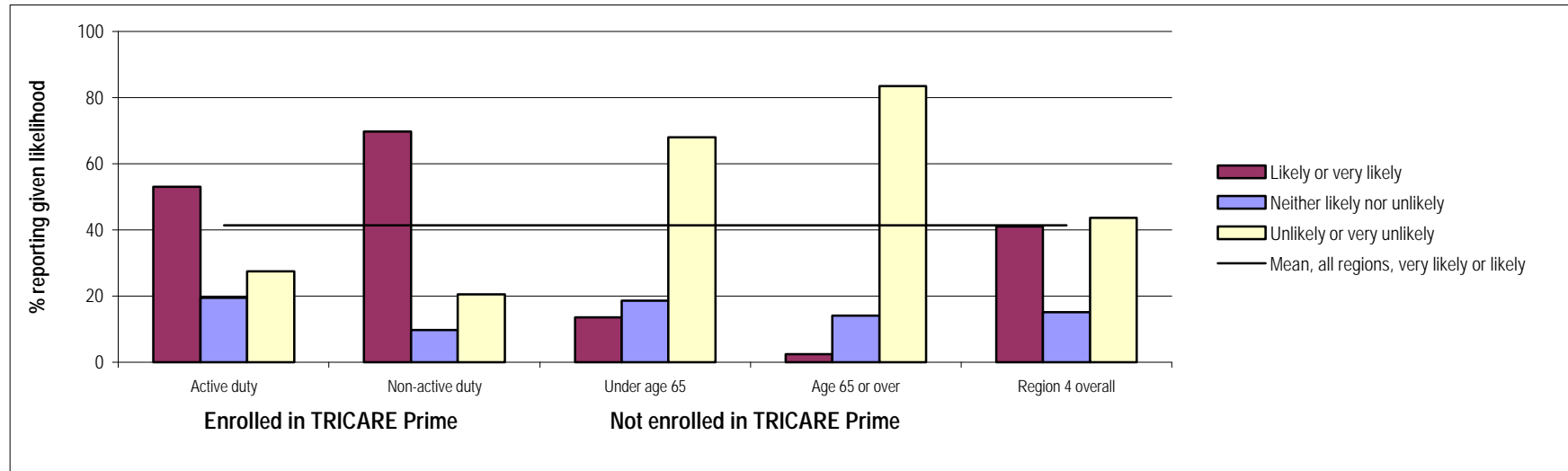
### Findings:

Satisfaction with civilian care in Region 4 is substantially greater than satisfaction with military care among all types of beneficiaries. Satisfaction with MTF care is lowest among retirees, survivors, and their family members (57 percent) and highest among the family members of active duty personnel (63 percent).

Satisfaction with CTF care is lowest among active duty personnel (75 percent) and highest among retirees, survivors, and their family members age 65 and over (86 percent).

Satisfaction with both civilian and military care in Region 4 is comparable to the average for all regions.

## 2.4 Intention to Enroll or Re-enroll in TRICARE Prime in Region 4, by Enrollment Status, and in All Regions



### Population:

Beneficiaries who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE

**Sample size:** 4,167

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting a given likelihood of enrolling or re-enrolling in the 12 months following their survey response

### Horizontal axis:

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime  
Type of enrollee

**Survey question:** 83

### What the exhibit shows:

- What the likelihood of enrolling or re-enrolling in TRICARE Prime is in Region 4 overall
- How that likelihood varies by enrollment status and type of enrollee
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

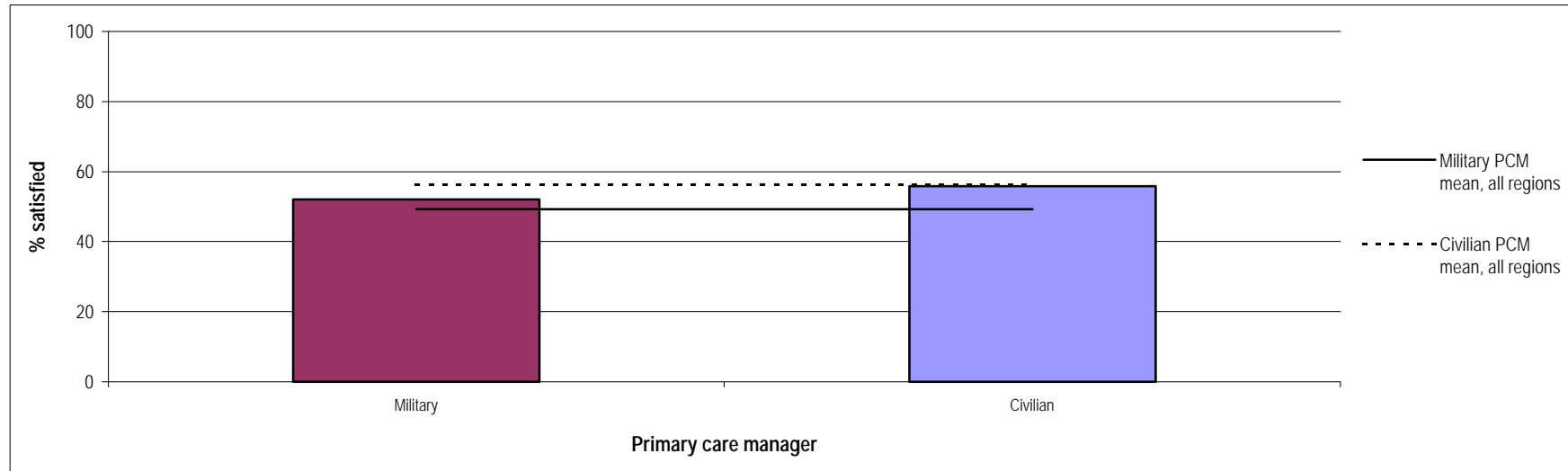
### Findings:

Forty-one percent of all beneficiaries in Region 4 who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE Prime, were likely to enroll or re-enroll in TRICARE Prime in the next year.

Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who reported being enrolled in TRICARE Prime, most planned to re-enroll in the next 12 months, including 53 percent of active duty enrollees and 70 percent of non-active duty enrollees. Still, 27 percent of active duty enrollees did not plan to re-enroll.

Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who were not enrolled in TRICARE Prime, but reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE, very few planned to enroll in the next 12 months (14 percent of non-enrollees under age 65, three percent of non-enrollees 65 years and over).

## 2.5 TRICARE Prime Enrollees Satisfied with Their Care in Region 4 and in All Regions, by Military and Civilian Primary Care Manager



### Population:

Beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Prime

**Sample size:** 2,517

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting they either "strongly agree" or "agree" they are satisfied with the health care they receive under TRICARE Prime

### Horizontal axis:

Type of PCM

*Military:* PCM at a MTF

*Civilian:* PCM at a civilian hospital or clinic

**Survey questions:** 79 and 82a

### What the exhibit shows:

- Whether enrollees' satisfaction with TRICARE Prime in Region 4 varies by type of PCM
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

### Findings:

In Region 4, satisfaction with TRICARE Prime is only slightly higher among enrollees who have a civilian PCM (56 percent) than among enrollees who have a military PCM (52 percent).

Satisfaction among enrollees in Region 4 is comparable to that for all regions.

Chapter

3

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## Access to Health Care

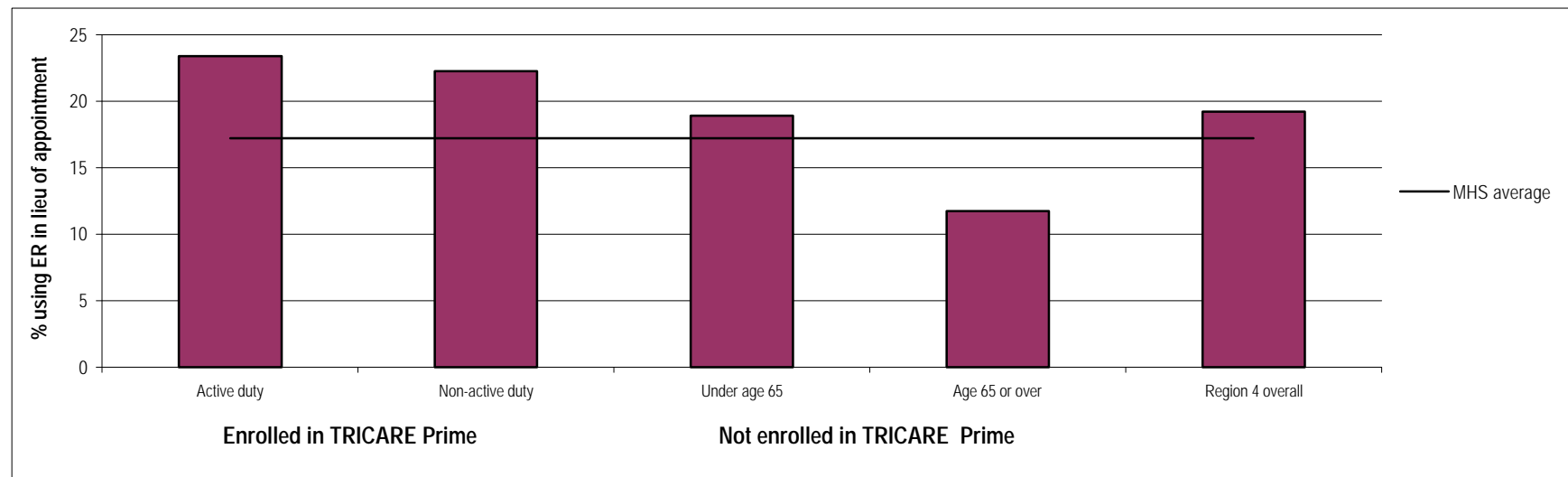
This chapter is designed to address the question, “How *accessible* is health care at military and civilian facilities to DoD beneficiaries?” Indicators of accessibility include:

- The number of beneficiaries who used an emergency room in lieu of their usual source of care because the facility they typically use was not available
- The number of days between calling to make an appointment and the appointment itself
- The length of office waits
- The reasons beneficiaries choose not to use military care are furnished to indicate areas for improvement.

### The key findings are:

- Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who used an ER in the past year, 19 percent used it because they could not get an appointment with their usual health care provider. TRICARE Prime enrollees were more likely than non-enrollees to report using the ER because they could not get a regular appointment.
- In Region 4, only 5 percent of TRICARE Prime enrollees reported waiting longer than 30 days for a routine care appointment at a military facility, compared with 10 percent of those not enrolled in TRICARE Prime. The TRICARE standard for enrollees is 30 days for such a visit.
- In Region 4, the incidence of long waits in a physician’s office is slightly greater at MTFs than at CTFs. Between 28 and 35 percent of MTF patients reported waiting more than 30 minutes to see a provider, compared with about 25 percent of CTF patients. The TRICARE standard is a 30-minute wait.
- The most frequently cited reasons for not receiving care at a military facility in Region 4 are the beneficiary’s distance from a MTF (33 percent), the difficulty of making appointments at a MTF (30 percent), and the higher quality of care in civilian facilities (23 percent). In addition, 27 percent of patients reported that they had never tried to use a MTF.

### 3.1 Beneficiaries' Use of an Emergency Room in Lieu of a Regular Appointment in Region 4, by Enrollment Status, and in All Regions


**Population:**

All beneficiaries who report using an ER in the past 12 months

**Sample size:** 2,671

**Vertical axis:**

The percent of the sample who used an ER in the 12 months preceding their survey response because they could not obtain an appointment at the place "they usually go" when they are sick or need health advice

**Horizontal axis:**

Enrollment status TRICARE Prime  
Types of enrollees

**Survey question:** 33

**What the exhibit shows:**

- Whether beneficiaries in Region 4 have used an ER because they could not obtain an appointment from their usual provider
- How such ER use varies by enrollment in TRICARE Prime and by type of enrollee
- How the findings for Region 4 compare to the findings for all regions

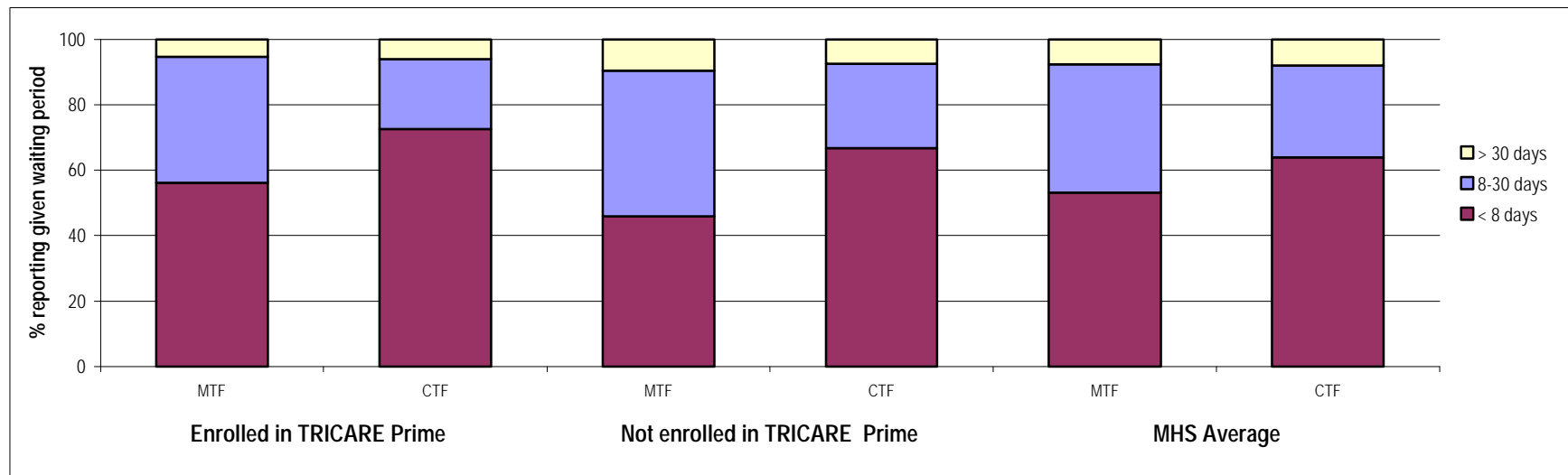
**Findings:**

Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who used an ER in the past year, 19 percent used it because they could not get an appointment with their usual health care provider. The rate of ER use in lieu of a regular appointment in Region 4 is only slightly higher than the MHS as a whole (17 percent).

TRICARE Prime enrollees were more likely than non-enrollees to report using the ER because they could not get a regular appointment. Twenty-three percent of active duty enrollees and 22 percent of non-active duty enrollees resorted to ER use for that reason, compared with 19 percent of non-enrollees under age 65 and 12 percent of non-enrollees age 65 or over.



### 3.2 Average Waiting Periods for Patients to Get an Appointment for Routine Care in Region 4, by Enrollment Status, and in All Regions



#### Population:

Patients who received some care at a MTF or CTF or both during the 12 months preceding their survey response

**Sample size:** 8,438

#### Vertical axis:

Each segment in a bar represents the percent of the sample reporting a given waiting period for routine care

#### Horizontal axis:

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime  
Care received at a MTF or CTF

**Survey questions:** 50a and 65a

#### What the exhibit shows:

- How waiting periods to get an appointment for routine care at MTFs compare to those at CTFs
- How waiting periods vary by enrollment status in TRICARE Prime and by type of enrollee
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

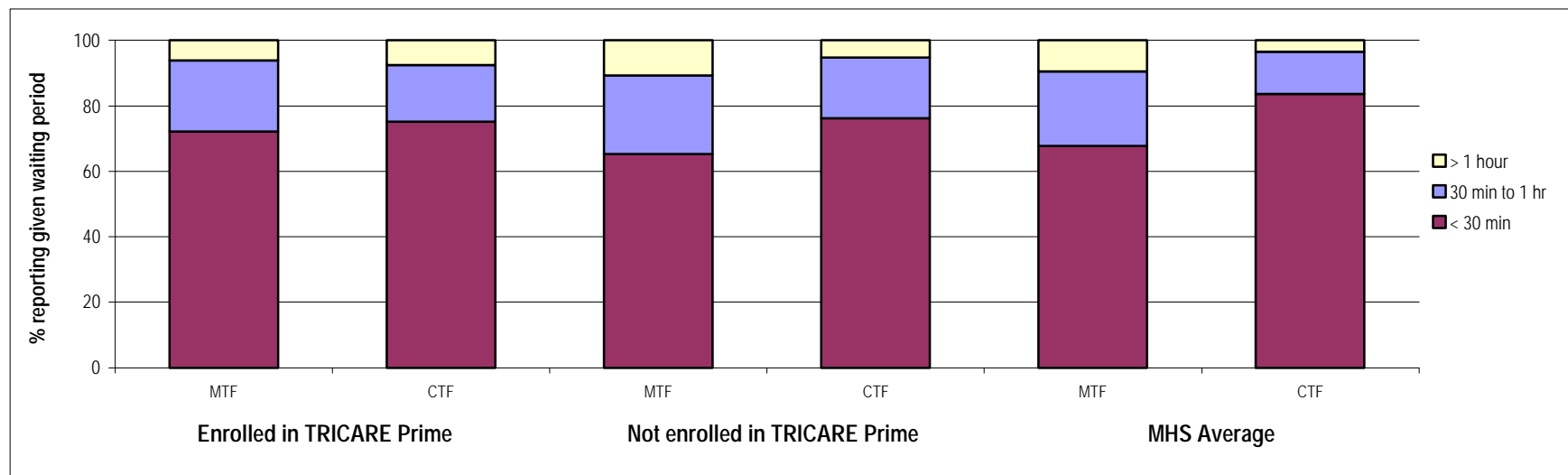
#### Findings:

In Region 4, only 5 percent of TRICARE Prime enrollees reported waiting longer than 30 days for a routine care appointment at a military facility, compared with 10 percent of those not enrolled in TRICARE Prime. A 30-day wait is the TRICARE standard for such an appointment.

At civilian facilities, 6 percent of enrollees and 8 percent of non-enrollees reported waiting longer than 30 days for a routine care appointment.

A majority of patients in Region 4 enrolled in TRICARE Prime waited a week or less for an appointment, at both military (56 percent) and civilian facilities (73 percent).

### 3.3 Waiting Time in Provider's Office in Region 4, by Enrollment Status, and in All Regions


**Population:**

Patients who received some care at a MTF or CTF or both during the 12 months preceding their survey response

**Sample size:** 5,731

**Vertical axis:**

Each segment in a bar represents the percent of the sample reporting a given waiting period in the provider's office

**Horizontal axis:**

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime  
Care received at a MTF or CTF

**Survey questions:** 48 and 63

**What the exhibit shows:**

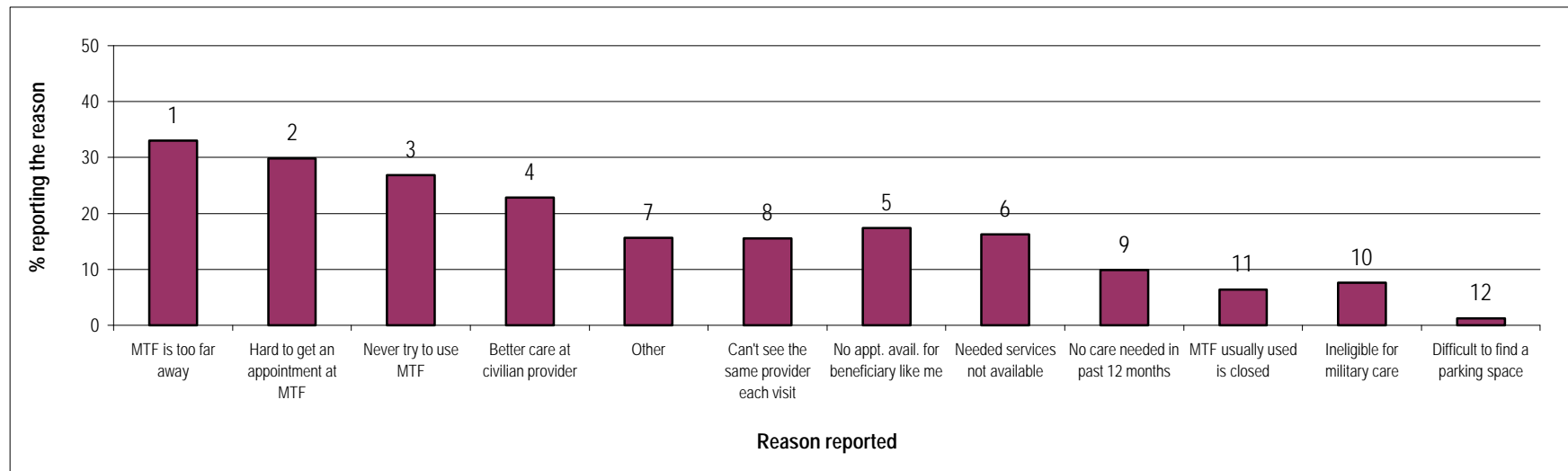
- How office waiting periods at MTFs compare to those at CTFs
- How waiting periods vary by enrollment status in TRICARE Prime and by type of enrollee
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

**Findings:**

In Region 4, over two-thirds of MTF patients and three-fourths of CTF patients waited less than 30 minutes in a provider's office. The TRICARE standard for office waiting periods is 30 minutes.

MTF patients were slightly more likely than CTF patients to experience long waits in a provider's office. Between 28 and 35 percent of MTF patients reported waiting more than 30 minutes to see a provider, compared with about 25 percent of CTF patients.

### 3.4 Reasons for Patients Not Relying on a Military Facility for Most of Their Care in Region 4


**Population:**

Beneficiaries who received some care from a MTF, but most of their care from a CTF during the 12 months preceding their survey response

**Sample size:** 3,709

**Vertical axis:**

The percent of the sample reporting a given reason for not relying on a MTF for care. The percentages do not sum to 100 because respondents were asked to mark all reasons that applied to them.

**Horizontal axis:**

Reasons reported by beneficiaries

**Survey question:** 56

**What the exhibit shows:**

- Why patients in Region 4 who reported getting most of their care from a civilian facility chose to do so
- The number above each bar represents the ranking given to each reason in Region 4. The order of the bars from left to right represent the ranking given to each reason for all regions. A comparison of the two shows how ranking for Region 4 compare to rankings for all regions.

**Findings:**

The four most frequently cited reasons for not receiving care at a military facility in Region 4 are identical to the top four reasons for all regions: the MTF is too far away (33 percent), it is too difficult to get an appointment at a MTF (30 percent), the beneficiary never tried to get care at a MTF (27 percent), and the beneficiary believed that they would receive better care at CTF (23 percent).

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Chapter

4

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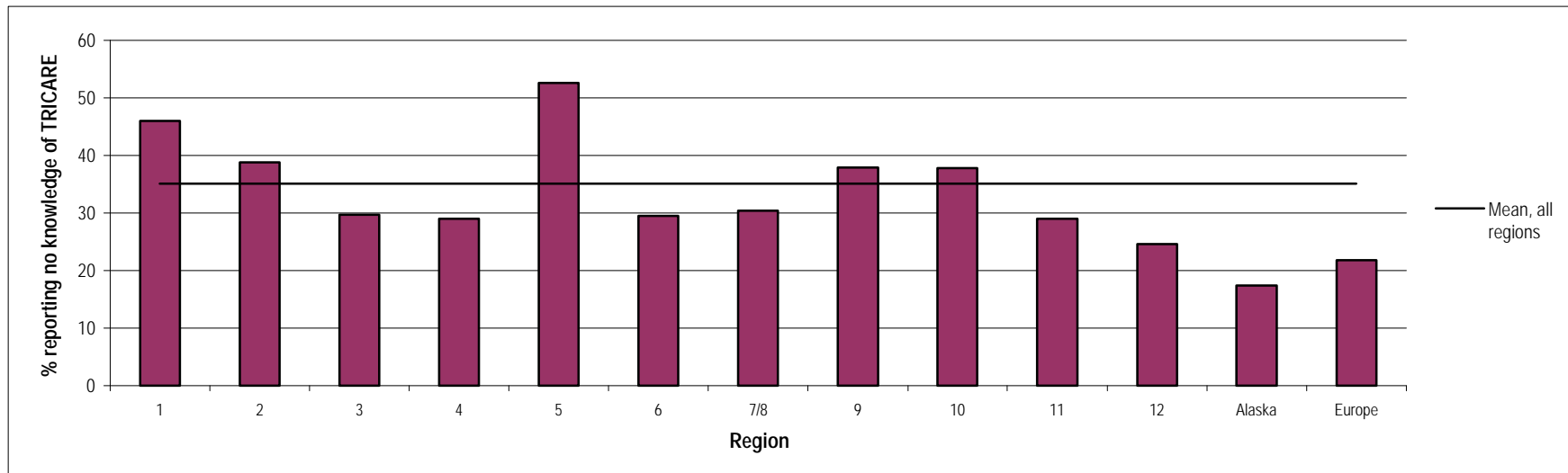
## Knowledge of TRICARE and TRICARE Prime

This chapter is designed to address the question, “How *knowledgeable* are beneficiaries about TRICARE, and what *sources of information* about TRICARE do beneficiaries use?” The HCSDB assesses beneficiary knowledge of TRICARE in three ways. First, it asks beneficiaries to assess the level of their knowledge about TRICARE using a 4-point scale ranging from *a great deal* to *nothing*. Second, it asks beneficiaries to rate the clarity of their information about TRICARE using a 5-point scale ranging from *very clear* to *very unclear*. Third, it asks beneficiaries to indicate the sources of their information about TRICARE.

### The key findings are:

- Only 29 percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 reported having no knowledge of TRICARE. This is virtually identical with the reported level of knowledge in other new TRICARE regions.
- Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE, 30 percent have unclear information about enrolling in TRICARE Prime. Among active duty beneficiaries, 25 percent reported having unclear information about enrolling.
- Among those in Region 4 who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE, the most frequently cited sources of information about TRICARE are the information package mailed to beneficiaries (60 percent), a TRICARE presentation (35 percent), the military base newspaper (30 percent) and friends and neighbors (30 percent).

## 4.1 Beneficiaries' Levels of Knowledge of TRICARE, by Region



**Population:**

All beneficiaries

**Sample size:** 73,898

**Vertical axis:**

The percent of the sample reporting no knowledge of TRICARE

**Horizontal axis:**

All regions

**Survey question:** 71

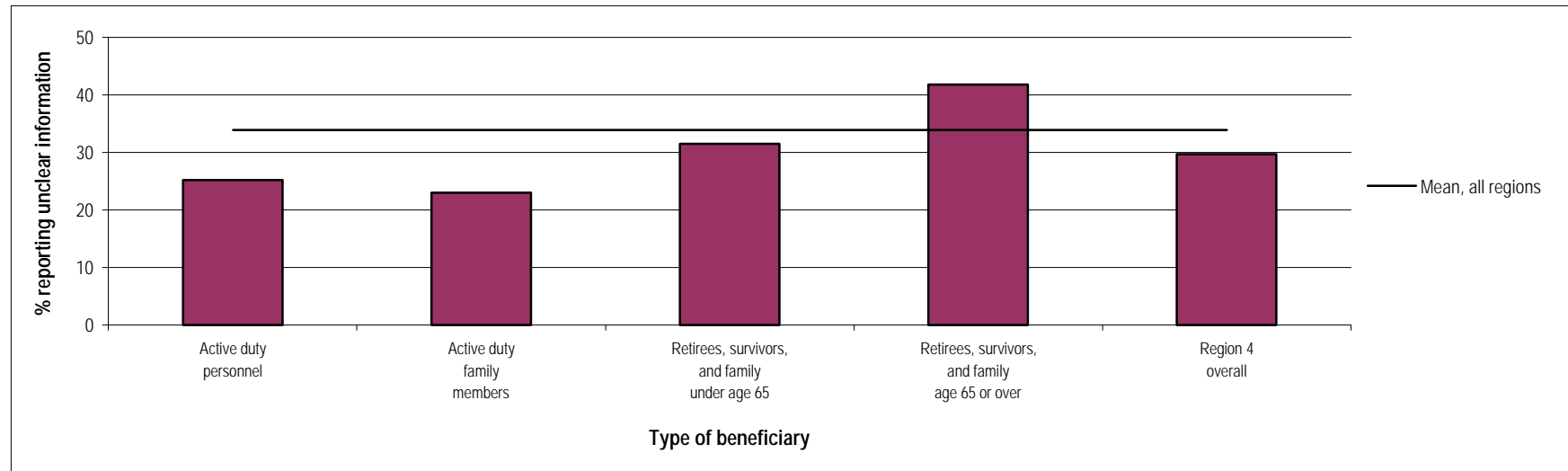
**What the exhibit shows:**

- How much beneficiaries know about TRICARE in all regions
- How beneficiaries' levels of knowledge vary across regions

**Findings:**

Only 29 percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 reported having no knowledge of TRICARE. This is virtually identical with the reported level of knowledge in other new TRICARE regions (Regions 3 and 7/8). This is also significantly lower than the average for all regions, where 35 percent reported having no knowledge of TRICARE.

## 4.2 Beneficiaries Having Unclear Information about Enrolling in TRICARE Prime in Region 4 and in All Regions



### Population:

Beneficiaries who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE

**Sample size:** 4,167

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting they “strongly disagree” or “disagree” that they have clear information on enrollment procedures for TRICARE Prime

### Horizontal axis:

Types of beneficiaries

**Survey question:** 73a

### What the exhibit shows:

- In Region 4 the percentage of beneficiaries reporting they have unclear information about enrolling in TRICARE Prime
- How the findings vary by type of beneficiary
- How the findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

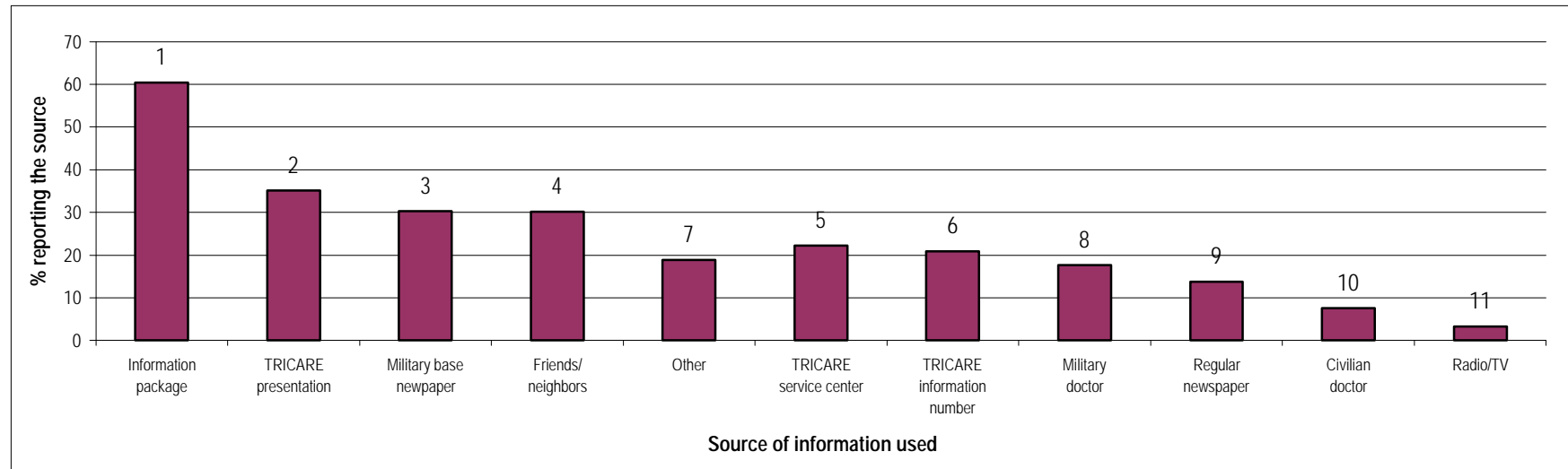
### Findings:

Among beneficiaries in Region 4 who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE, 30 percent reported having unclear information about enrolling in TRICARE Prime. In the MHS as a whole, 34 percent of beneficiaries with some knowledge of TRICARE have unclear information about enrolling in TRICARE Prime.

Twenty-five percent of active duty personnel, who are required to enroll in TRICARE Prime, have unclear information about enrolling.

Retirees, survivors, and their family members age 65 or over are the most likely to report having unclear information about enrolling in TRICARE Prime (42 percent).

### 4.3 Sources of Information about TRICARE in Region 4 and in All Regions


**Population:**

Beneficiaries who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE

**Sample size:** 4,167

**Vertical axis:**

The percent of the sample reporting that they received information about TRICARE from a given source. Percentages do not sum to 100 because respondents were asked to mark all the sources they had used to learn about TRICARE

**Horizontal axis:**

Sources of information

**Survey question:** 72

**What the exhibit shows:**

- The sources of information about TRICARE that beneficiaries in Region 4 use
- The number above each bar indicates the ranking for that source of information in Region 4. The order of the bars from left to right indicates the ranking of sources across all regions. A comparison of the two shows how rankings for Region 4 compare to rankings for all regions.

**Findings:**

Among those in Region 4 who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE, the four most frequently cited sources of information about TRICARE were information packages mailed to beneficiaries (60 percent), a TRICARE presentation (35 percent), a military base newspaper (30 percent), and friends and neighbors (30 percent). These are the same four information sources most frequently cited in other regions.



Chapter

5

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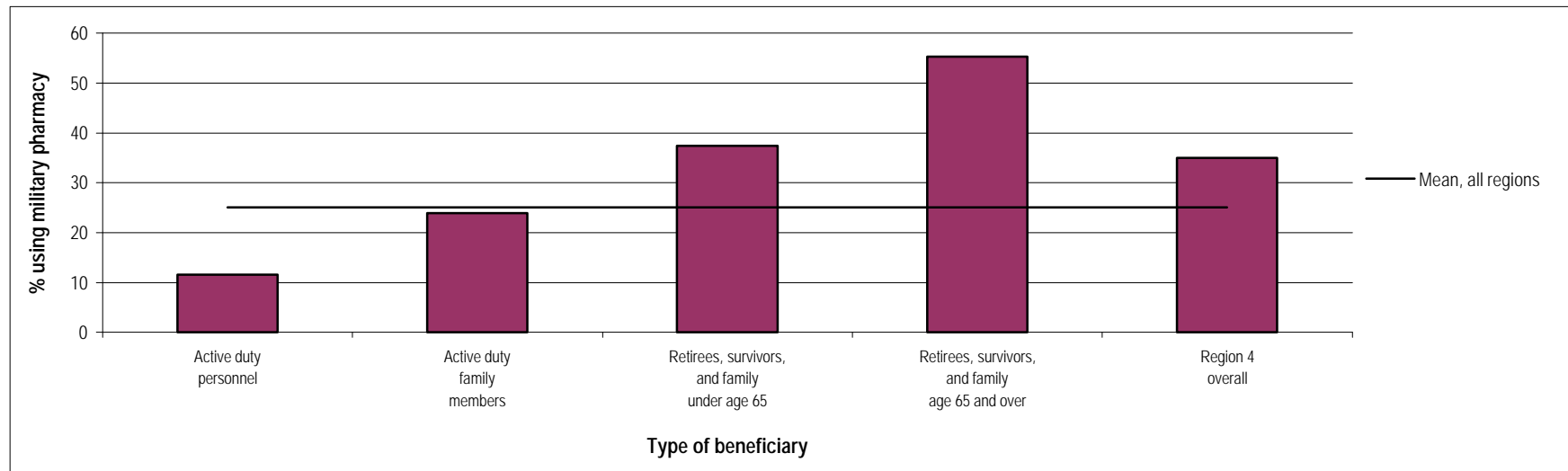
## Source of Health Care

This chapter is designed to address the question, “What health care *services* do beneficiaries use, and what are the *sources* of those services?” The HCSDB asks about pharmacy use as well as sources of health care.

### The key findings are:

- Thirty-five percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 and 25 percent of beneficiaries in all regions used a military pharmacy to fill prescriptions written by a civilian provider in the 12 months prior to the survey. In Region 4, retirees, survivors, and family members age 65 or over (55 percent) were the most likely to do this.
- Ninety-two percent of active duty personnel use a MTF for their regular source of care, as do 67 percent of active duty family members, 30 percent of retirees and their family members under age 65, and 13 percent of retirees and their family members age 65 or over. Only 2 percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 rely on something other than a MTF or CTF as their usual source of care.

## 5.1 Use of Military Pharmacies to Fill Prescriptions Written by a Civilian Provider



### Population:

All beneficiaries

**Sample size:** 6,201

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample using a military pharmacy to fill any prescriptions written by a civilian provider during the 12 months preceding their survey response

### Horizontal axis:

Types of beneficiaries

**Survey question:** 53

### What the exhibit shows:

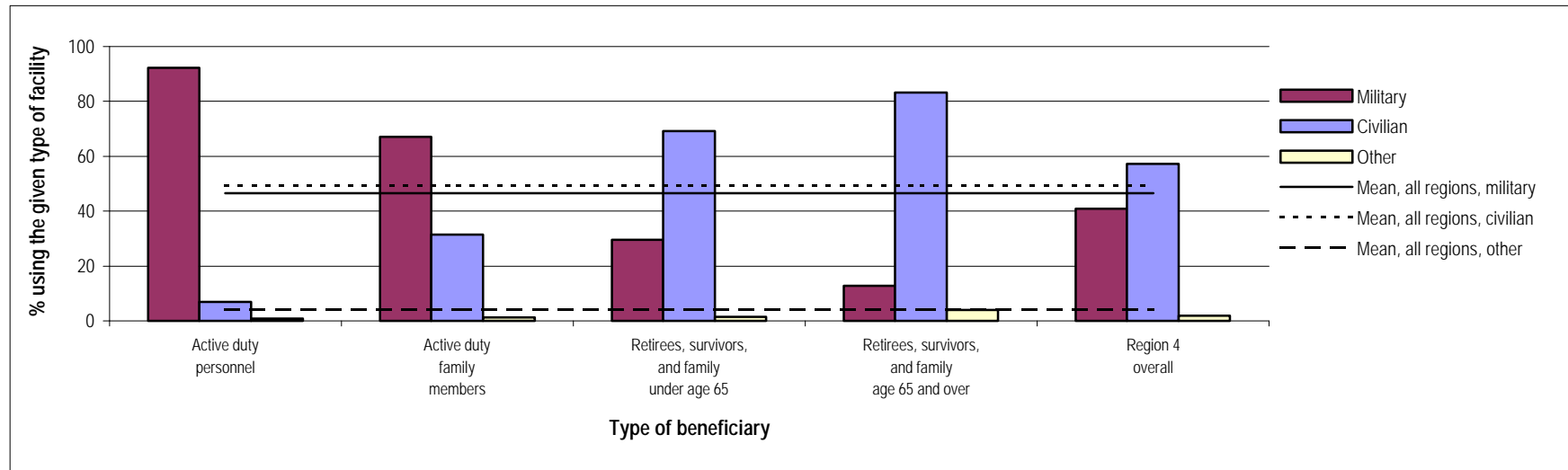
- How the use of military pharmacies to fill prescriptions written by a civilian provider varies by the type of beneficiary in Region 4
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

### Findings:

In Region 4, retirees, survivors, and their family members age 65 or over were the most likely to have used a military pharmacy to fill a prescription written by a civilian provider (55 percent), while active duty personnel were the least likely (12 percent).

Beneficiaries in Region 4 were more likely to have used a military pharmacy to fill prescriptions written by a civilian provider in the 12 months prior to the survey than were beneficiaries in the regions overall (35 and 25 percent, respectively).

## 5.2 Usual Source of Care for Beneficiaries Who Are Sick or Need Advice



### Population:

Beneficiaries who reported having a usual source of care

**Sample size:** 5,649

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample using a military, civilian, or other facility as a regular source of care

### Horizontal axis:

Types of beneficiaries

**Survey question:** 31

### What the exhibit shows:

- The percentage of beneficiaries who usually seek care from a military or civilian facility
- How the usual source of care varies by the type of beneficiary
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

### Findings:

Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who reported having a usual source of care, 57 percent rely on a civilian facility and 41 percent rely on a military facility. Only 2 percent reported having a usual source of care other than a civilian or military facility. Across all regions, 49 percent of beneficiaries rely on a civilian facility and 47 percent rely on a military facility.

Active duty personnel and their family members in Region 4 were more likely than the average beneficiary to use a military provider as their usual source of care (92 and 67 percent, respectively). Retirees, survivors, and their family members were more likely than the average beneficiary to rely on a civilian provider (70 percent of those under 65 and 83 percent of those age 65 or over).

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Chapter

6

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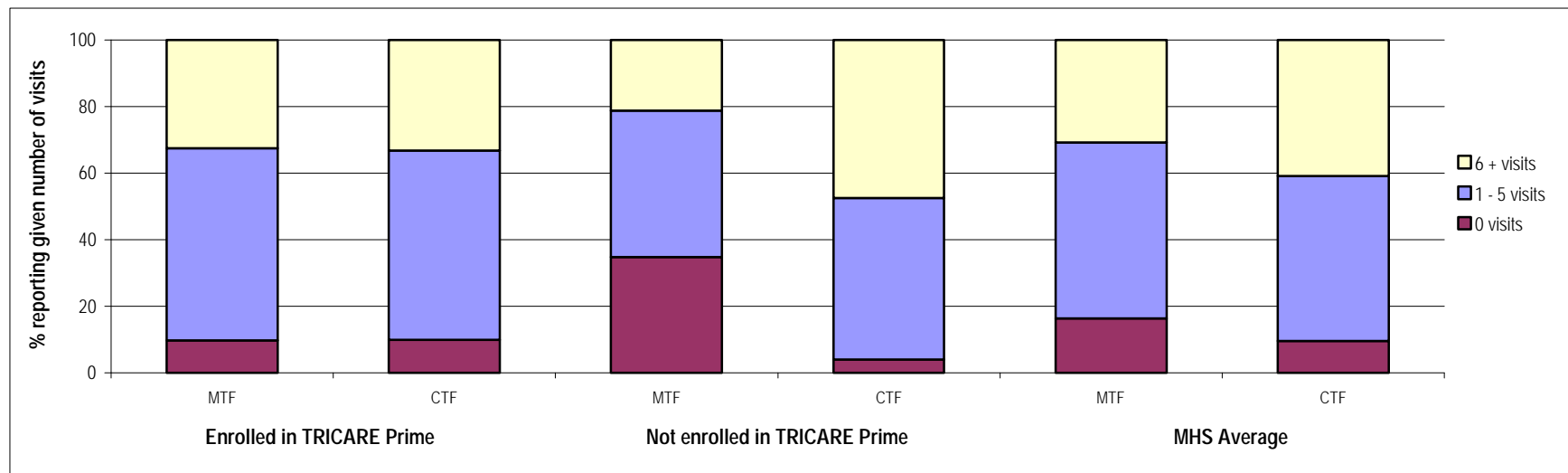
## Use of Health Care

This chapter is designed to address the question, “How much health care do MHS beneficiaries use?” Although the HCSDB asked a number of questions about use of care, we report on the amount of care used in terms of a single indicator – the number of outpatient visits in the 12 months prior to the survey.

### The key findings are:

- In the 12 months leading up to the survey, MHS beneficiaries who used civilian facilities tended to have more outpatient visits than those who used military facilities. Across all regions, 41 percent of CTF patients had six or more outpatient visits, compared with 31 percent of MTF patients.
- Among MTF patients in Region 4, those enrolled in TRICARE Prime had significantly more outpatient visits than those not enrolled in Prime. In contrast to the pattern observed at MTFs, TRICARE Prime enrollees at CTFs tended to have fewer outpatient visits than their non-enrolled counterparts.

## 6.1 The Number of Outpatient Visits in the Past Year by Patients in Region 4, by Enrollment Status and Military or Civilian Treatment Facility, and in All Regions



### Population:

Patients who received some care at a MTF or CTF during the 12 months preceding their survey response

**Sample size:** 5,731

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample who made a given number of outpatient visits

### Horizontal axis:

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime  
Patients at a MTF or CTF

**Survey questions:** 46 and 61

### What the exhibit shows:

- The number of outpatient visits in Region 4 in the past year
- How the visit rates vary by enrollment status and whether the care was from a MTF or CTF
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

### Findings:

In the 12 months leading up to the survey, MHS patients who used civilian facilities tended to have more outpatient visits than those who used military facilities. Forty-one percent of CTF patients had 6 or more outpatient visits, compared with 31 percent of MTF patients.

Region 4 MTF patients enrolled in TRICARE Prime had more outpatient visits than those not enrolled in Prime. About 90 percent of enrollees had at least one outpatient visit, and 33 percent had over six visits. Of those not enrolled in Prime, 65 percent had at least one outpatient visit, and 21 percent had over six visits.

In contrast to the pattern observed for MTF patients, TRICARE Prime enrollees who were CTF patients tended to have fewer outpatient visits than their non-enrolled counterparts.

## Chapter

# 7

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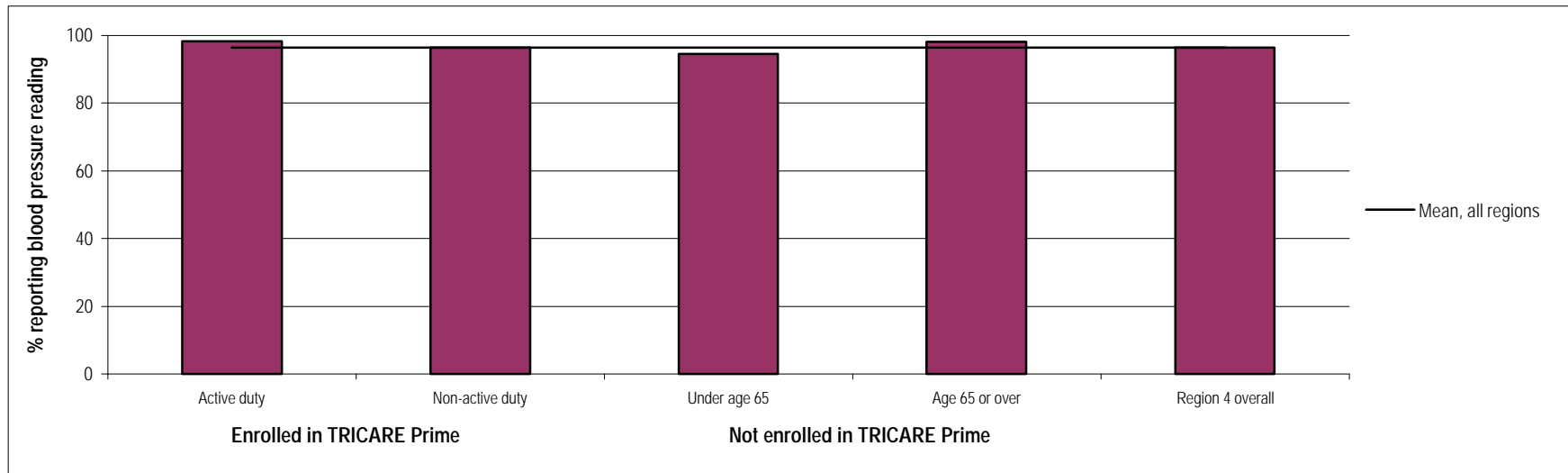
## Use of Preventive Services

This chapter is designed to address the question, “How much, and what types of, *preventive health care* do beneficiaries use?” The HCSDB asked all beneficiaries whether they used each of the items in an extensive list of preventive health care services and how long ago the most recent use of care was.

### The key findings are:

- Nearly all MHS beneficiaries had a blood pressure screening in the past two years, as did beneficiaries in Region 4 (96 percent). Both results exceed the Healthy People 2000 goal of 90 percent.
- Eighty-three percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 had a cholesterol screening in the past five years. This exceeds the Healthy People 2000 goal for adults (75 percent) and is about equal to the average for all regions (81 percent).
- Eighty-three percent of female beneficiaries age 50 or over in Region 4 had a breast cancer screening in the past two years. This result is comparable with the MHS average of 84 percent. Both results exceed the Healthy People 2000 goal of 60 percent and the civilian benchmark of 56 percent.
- Eighty-eight percent of female beneficiaries and 97 percent of female active duty personnel in Region 4 have had a Pap smear in the past three years. Both results meet the Healthy People 2000 goal of 85 percent and surpass the 60 to 70 percent result observed in the civilian sector.
- Of the beneficiaries in Region 4 who were pregnant at some point during the year preceding the survey, 90 percent received prenatal care in the first trimester. In the civilian sector, between 76 and 84 percent of pregnant women receive prenatal care in the first trimester. The Healthy People 2000 goal is 90 percent.
- Over three-fourths of male beneficiaries age 50 or over in Region 4 (79 percent) and in the MHS overall (78 percent) had a prostate screening in the past two years. The American Cancer Society recommends an annual prostate exam for men age 50 or over.

## 7.1 Blood Pressure Readings in Region 4 and in All Regions



**Population:**

All beneficiaries

**Sample size:** 6,201

**Vertical axis:**

The percent of the sample reporting having had a blood pressure reading during the two years preceding their survey response

**Horizontal axis:**

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime

**Survey question:** 12

**What the exhibit shows:**

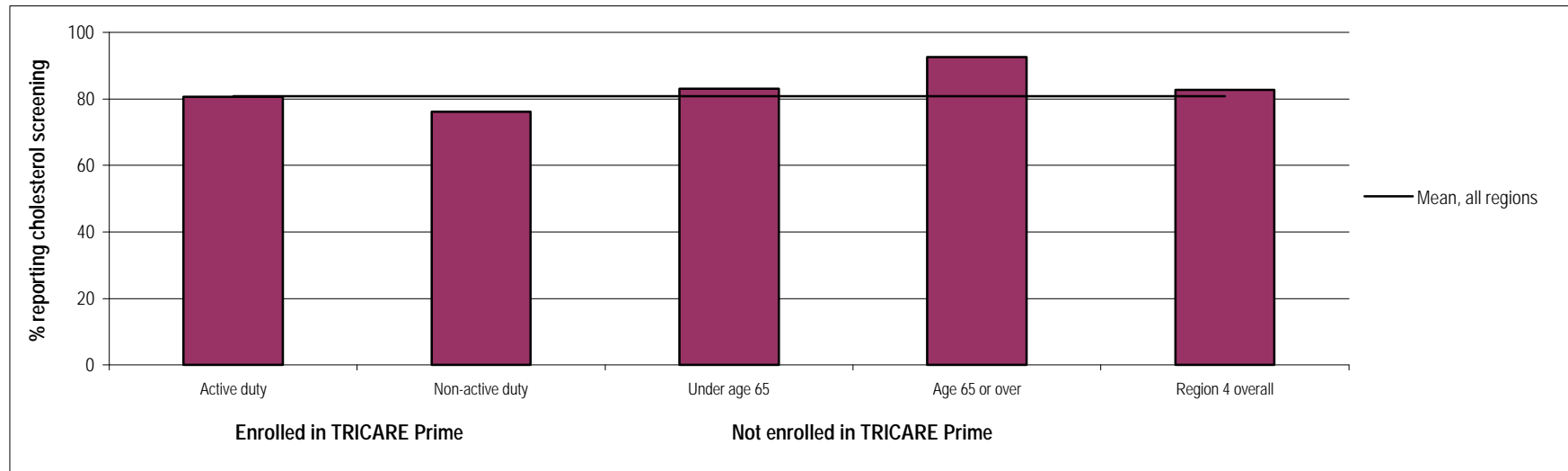
- Percentage of beneficiaries in Region 4 who had a blood pressure reading in the past two years
- How the findings vary by enrollment status in TRICARE Prime
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

**Findings:**

Nearly all MHS beneficiaries (96 percent) had a blood pressure screening in the past two years, as did 96 percent of beneficiaries in Region 4. These results exceed the Healthy People 2000 goal of 90 percent.



## 7.2 Cholesterol Screening in Region 4 and in All Regions



### Population:

All beneficiaries

**Sample size:** 6,201

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting having had a cholesterol screening during the five years preceding their survey response

### Horizontal axis:

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime

**Survey question:** 13

### What the exhibit shows:

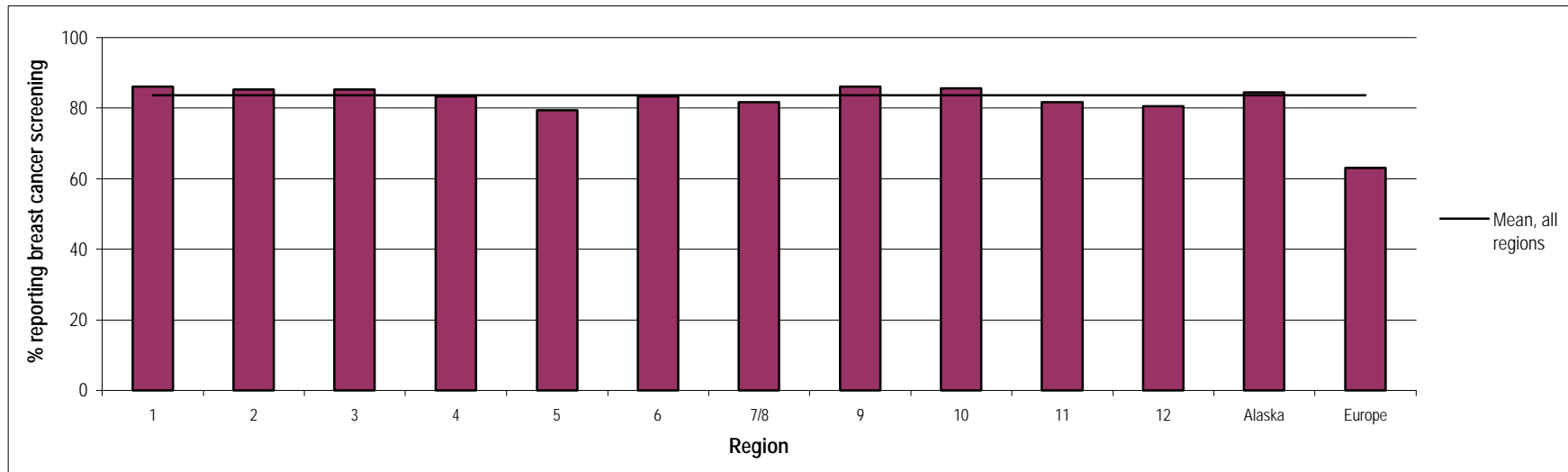
- Percentage of beneficiaries in Region 4 who had a cholesterol screening in the past five years
- How the findings vary by enrollment status in TRICARE Prime
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

### Findings:

Eighty-three percent of beneficiaries in Region 4 had a cholesterol screening in the past five years. This exceeds the Healthy People 2000 goal for adults (75 percent) and also exceeds the average for all regions (81 percent).

Beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Prime were less likely than non-enrollees to have had a cholesterol screening in the past five years. Between 76 and 81 percent of enrollees have had such a screening, compared with between 83 and 93 percent of non-enrollees.

## 7.3 Breast Cancer Screening



### Population:

Female beneficiaries age 50 and over

**Sample size:** 19,347

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting having been "checked by mammography or other X-ray-like procedure" during the two years preceding their survey response

### Horizontal axis:

All regions

**Survey question:** 26

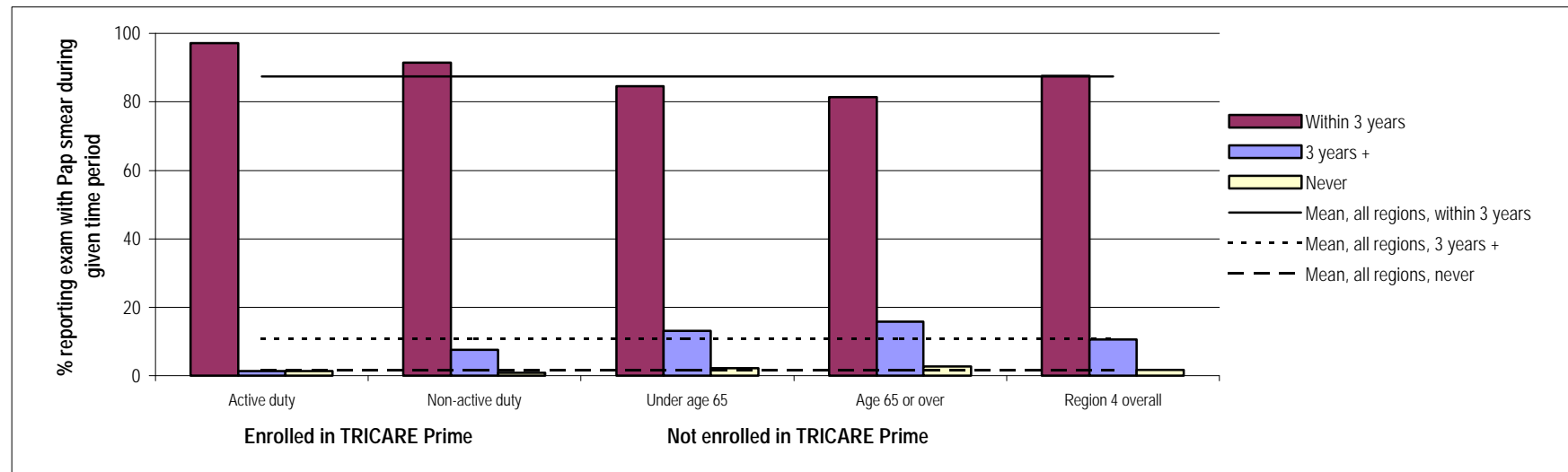
### What the exhibit shows:

- The percentage of female beneficiaries in all regions over age 50 who have had a mammogram or other X-ray-like procedure for breast cancer screening in the past two years
- How the findings vary by region

### Findings:

Eighty-three percent of female beneficiaries age 50 or over in Region 4 had a breast cancer screening in the past two years. This result is comparable with the MHS average of 84 percent and exceeds the Healthy People 2000 goal of 60 percent and the civilian benchmark of 56 percent.

## 7.4 Pap Smear in Region 4 and in All Regions



### Population:

All female beneficiaries

**Sample size:** 3,203

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting having had "a routine female examination with a Pap smear" in a given time period

### Horizontal axis:

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime

**Survey question:** 24

### What the exhibit shows:

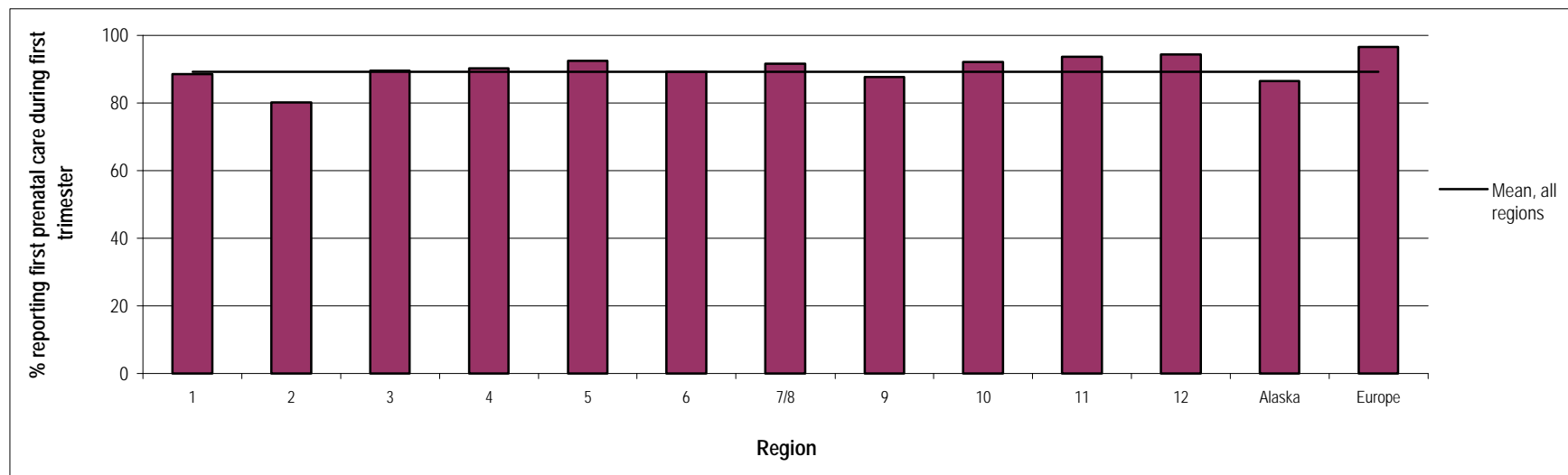
- How recently female beneficiaries in Region 4 have had a Pap smear
- How the findings vary by enrollment status in TRICARE Prime
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

### Findings:

Eighty-eight percent of all female beneficiaries in Region 4 had a Pap smear in the past three years. This compares favorably with the 60 to 70 percent result observed in the civilian sector and exceeds the Healthy People 2000 goal of 85 percent. Results in Region 4 are nearly identical to those for the MHS overall (88 percent).

Women enrolled in TRICARE Prime (91 to 97 percent) in Region 4 were more likely than their non-enrolled counterparts (81 to 85 percent) to have had a Pap smear in the past three years.

## 7.5 Timing of First Prenatal Care



### Population:

Female beneficiaries who were pregnant when they responded to the survey or during the 12 preceding months

**Sample size:** 2,386

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting receiving obstetric care from a doctor or other health professional during the first trimester

### Horizontal axis:

All regions

**Survey question:** 29

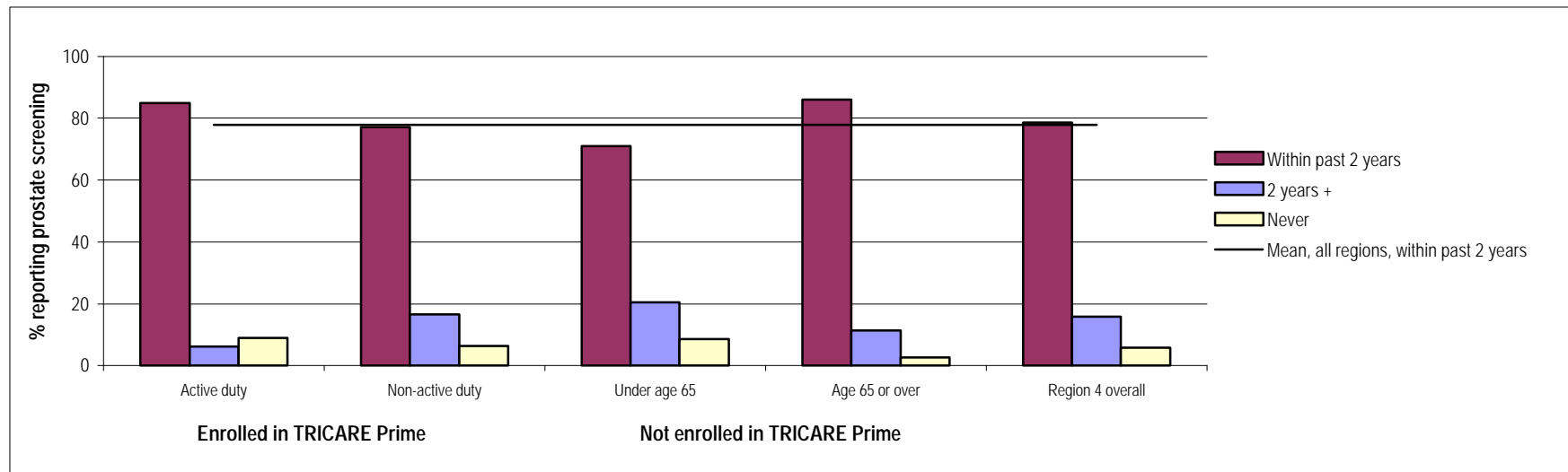
### What the exhibit shows:

- The percentage of pregnant beneficiaries in each region who reported having received prenatal care at some point in the first trimester
- How the findings vary by region

### Findings:

Ninety percent of the female beneficiaries in Region 4 who were pregnant at some point during the year preceding the survey received prenatal care during the first trimester. This result meets the Healthy People 2000 goal of 90 percent and is comparable to the average of all regions (89 percent). In the civilian sector, between 76 and 84 percent of pregnant women receive prenatal care in the first trimester.

## 7.6 Prostate Screening in Region 4 and in All Regions



### Population:

Male beneficiaries age 50 or over

**Sample size:** 1,845

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting having received "a prostate gland examination or blood test for prostate disease" in a given time period

### Horizontal axis:

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime

**Survey question:** 23

### What the exhibit shows:

- How recently male beneficiaries age 50 or over in Region 4 received a prostate screening
- How the findings vary by enrollment status in TRICARE Prime
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

### Findings:

Seventy-nine percent of male beneficiaries age 50 or over in Region 4 had a prostate screening in the past two years. This result is comparable to the result for all regions (78 percent). The American Cancer Society recommends an annual prostate exam for men age 50 or over.

In Region 4, beneficiaries under age 65 and not enrolled in TRICARE Prime had the lowest rate of prostate screening in the past two years (71 percent). Non-enrollees over age 65 had the highest rate (86 percent).

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Chapter

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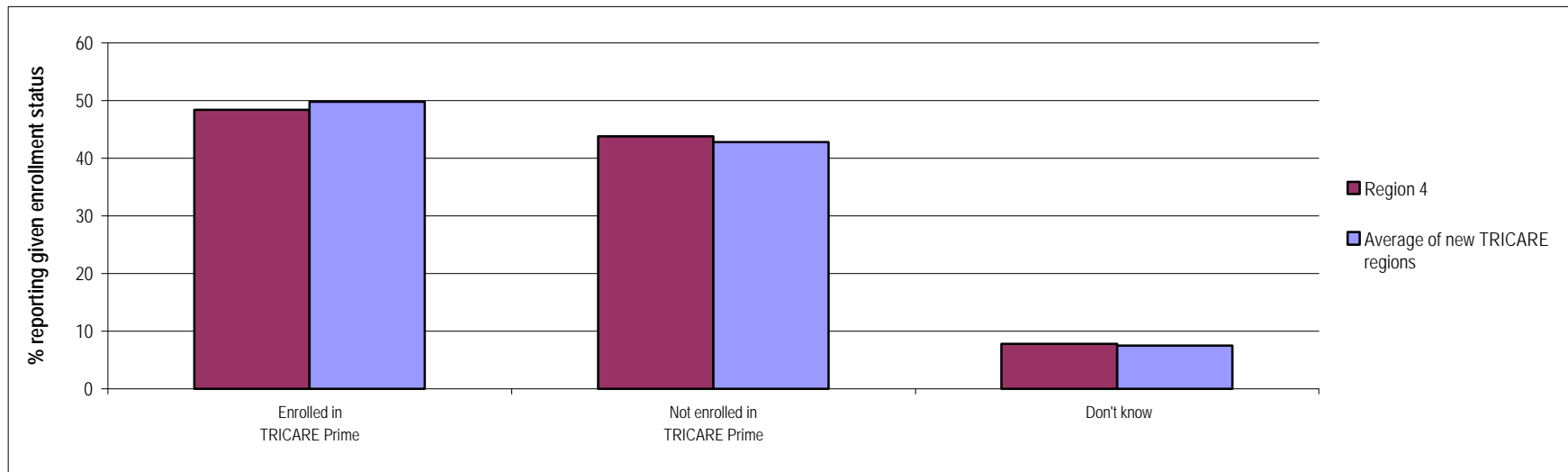
## Enrollment and Beneficiary Health Status

This chapter presents findings on two key beneficiary characteristics – enrollment in TRICARE Prime and health status. Health status is based on a battery of 12 questions called the SF-12, which was developed by the Medical Center of New England under a grant from the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation. From the 12 questions, we computed two overall scores for each beneficiary – the composite physical health score and the composite mental health score. Only the former is reported here, and we compared the scores of MHS beneficiaries to the median score for the U.S. population for six age groups (18-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75+). Here, we report on the percent of beneficiaries whose composite physical health score is lower than the national median score for their age.

### The key findings are:

- Enrollment in TRICARE Prime in Region 4 (48 percent) is comparable with enrollment in the average new TRICARE regions (50 percent).
- In Region 4, 53 percent of beneficiaries have a composite physical health score below the age-adjusted median score for the U.S. population. This suggests that, in terms of health status, beneficiaries in Region 4 are similar to their counterparts in the civilian population. Active duty beneficiaries tend to be somewhat healthier than civilians of the same age, with only 43 percent falling below the median score for the U.S. population.

## 8.1 Enrollment in TRICARE Prime in Region 4 and in Mature TRICARE Regions



### Population:

Beneficiaries who reported knowing at least a little about TRICARE Prime

**Sample size:** 19,248

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample reporting a given enrollment status as of the time of their survey response

### Horizontal axis:

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime

**Survey question:** 76

### What the exhibit shows:

- The proportion of beneficiaries in Region 4 who are enrolled in, not enrolled in, and don't know whether they are enrolled in TRICARE Prime
- How findings for Region 4 compare to findings for other mature TRICARE regions

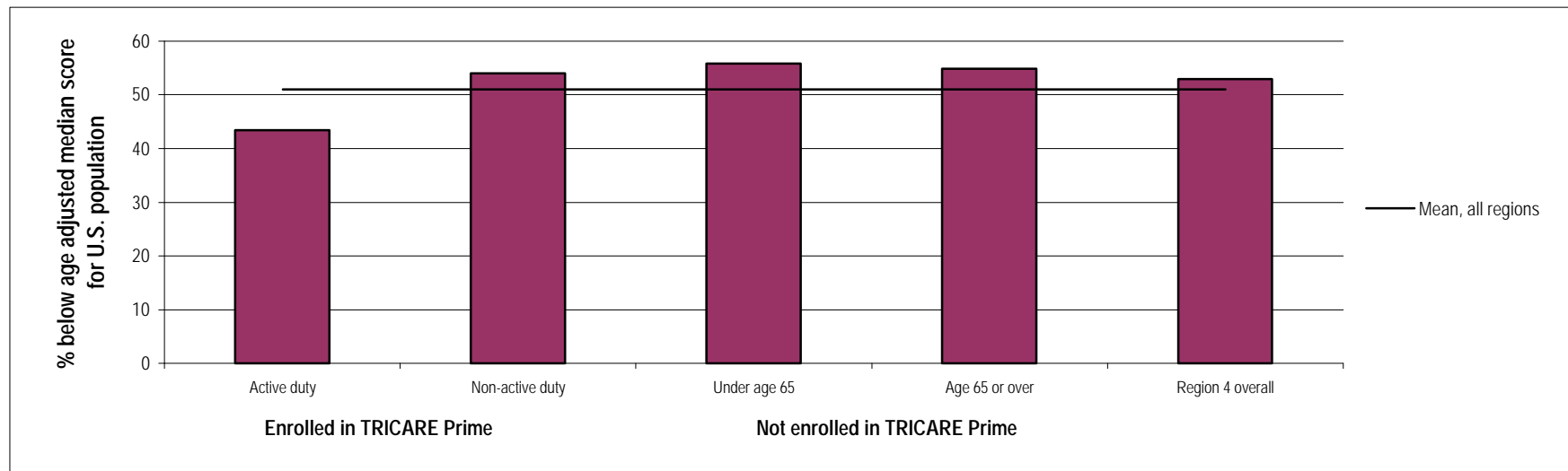
### Findings:

Forty-eight percent of beneficiaries who knew at least a little about TRICARE in Region 4 report enrollment in TRICARE Prime. This is comparable with enrollment in the average new TRICARE region (50 percent).

In Region 4, 8 percent of beneficiaries who report knowing at least a little about TRICARE do not know whether they are enrolled in TRICARE Prime. A similar result is observed for other new TRICARE regions in the MHS (7 percent).



## 8.2 Composite Scores of Physical Health in Region 4 and in All Regions



### Population:

All beneficiaries

**Sample size:** 6,201

### Vertical axis:

The percent of the sample with a composite physical health score below the age-adjusted median score for the U.S. population

### Horizontal axis:

Enrollment status in TRICARE Prime

**Survey questions:** 1-7

### What the exhibit shows:

- The proportion of beneficiaries in Region 4 who are in poor health (self-reported)
- How the findings vary by enrollment status
- How the findings for Region 4 compare to findings for all regions

### Findings:

In Region 4, 53 percent of beneficiaries have a composite physical health score below the age-adjusted median score for the U.S. population. This suggests that, in terms of health status, beneficiaries in Region 4 are similar to their counterparts in the civilian population. Active duty beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Prime tend to be somewhat healthier than civilians of the same age, with only 43 percent falling below the median score for the U.S. population.

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## Chapter

9

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## Performance Improvement Plan

The purpose of this Performance Improvement Plan is to summarize the large number of satisfaction questions in the HCSDB so that the underlying patterns are more easily seen. These patterns help to identify key aspects of services or care that most influence beneficiary satisfaction.

Each point in Figure 9.1 represents one of the questions about satisfaction with military health care, Questions 52a-gg. For example, point H represents satisfaction with the length of time the beneficiary waits in the provider's office. The "importance" score in the figure is the correlation of overall satisfaction with ratings of these individual aspects of health care service. (A correlation was developed for each item.) For example, the correlation for office waiting time would indicate how "important" office waiting time is in determining the respondent's overall satisfaction with military care. Each specific aspect of health care, such as office waiting time, is a component of overall health care. Overall satisfaction with health care is a combination of the satisfaction ratings of individual components. The closer a point is to the top of the figure, the more important that component is in determining overall satisfaction with military health care.

The intersection of a service's importance and satisfaction value defines a point on the grid. The middle values of importance and satisfaction determine the lines that divide the grid into four priority quadrants. Services above the horizontal line are of greater importance to the beneficiary than those below the horizontal line, and they are noteworthy for their contribution to overall satisfaction. Services that beneficiaries are less satisfied with lie to the left of the vertical line, and those they are more satisfied with lie to the right of the line.

The quadrants may be interpreted as follows:

- **Top priority improvement opportunities** are in the top left quadrant. These are specific aspects of health care with which beneficiaries are relatively dissatisfied and, at the same time, are important in determining overall satisfaction. These are the areas that represent the greatest opportunities for increasing overall beneficiary satisfaction.
- **Top priority areas to maintain are in the top right quadrant.** These are aspects of health care with which beneficiaries are relatively satisfied and that are important in determining overall satisfaction. These are current strengths of the region.
- **Secondary priority improvement opportunities** are in bottom left quadrant. Low importance in determining overall satisfaction and low satisfaction characterize these aspects of health care. There may be a need for improvement, but these are lower priority items.
- **Secondary priority areas to maintain are in the bottom right quadrant.** These aspects of health care are characterized by low importance in determining

overall satisfaction and high satisfaction. These areas appear to be meeting beneficiaries' expectations.

## **Findings**

The following specific aspects of military health care in Region 4 both were important to overall beneficiary satisfaction with military health care and received relatively low satisfaction scores. These areas, which fall into three categories, should be the focus of remedial action in Region 4.

### **Access to System Resources**

- Access to health care whenever you need it (C)

### **Quality of Care**

- Ability to diagnose your health care problems (M)

### **Concern Shown by Health Care Providers**

- Advice provider gives you about ways to avoid illness and stay healthy (U)
- Reassurance and support offered to you by health care providers (Z)
- Health care providers' personal interest in the outcome of your problem (DD)
- Amount of time spent with health care providers during a visit (AA)

**Figure 9.1 Performance Improvement Plan for Region 4**